

ANG
Bayan

PAHAYAGAN NG PARTIDO KOMUNISTA NG PILIPINAS
PINAPATNUBAYAN NG
MARXISMO-LENINISMO-MAOISMO

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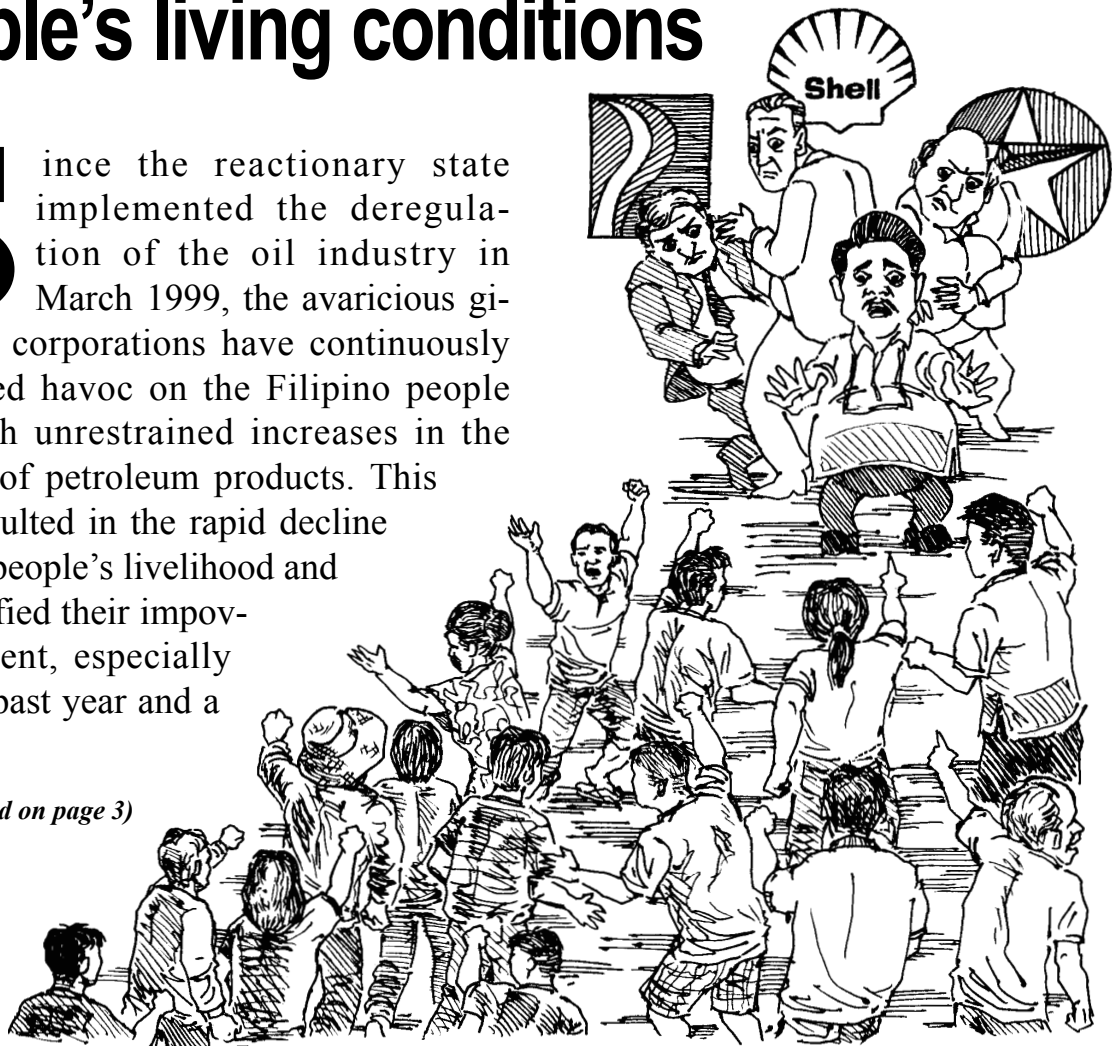
September 2000

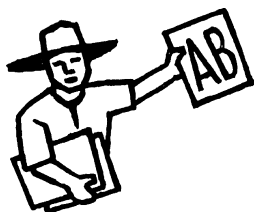
EDITORIAL

Resolutely resist continuous oil price hikes and the deterioration of the people's living conditions

Since the reactionary state implemented the deregulation of the oil industry in March 1999, the avaricious giant oil corporations have continuously wreaked havoc on the Filipino people through unrestrained increases in the prices of petroleum products. This has resulted in the rapid decline of the people's livelihood and intensified their impoverishment, especially in the past year and a half.

(continued on page 3)





Uphold AB!

Starting with this issue, *Ang Bayan (AB)* will come out monthly while looking forward to coming out more frequently in the future. The decision to come out monthly is part of the effort to make *AB* a more effective instrument to unite the Party and disseminate revolutionary calls.

In the past two years, *AB's* pages served as a platform for the untiring exposure of the rottenness and corruption, fascism and puppetry of the reactionary Estrada regime and as an outlet for the broadening call to oppose and overthrow it.

It also served as a bearer of good news on victories in the realm of mass struggles, the continuing expansion of the united front and the intensification of guerrilla warfare nationwide. It publishes the Party stand on burning people's issues and echoes the call of the Party for the all-sided advance of the revolutionary movement.

Through the efforts of the Party's leadership and membership, the hindrances and difficulties facing *AB* as a guerrilla newspaper are being overcome. Since January 1999, *AB* has been coming out regularly on a bimonthly basis and has also published special releases tackling specific important issues. Aside from the original Pilipino, *AB* also regularly publishes its English and Bisaya editions. Since September 1999, it has also come out in Hiligaynon. The internet homepage of *AB* which was launched in October 1999, is being accessed by more and

more comrades and readers. Several tens of thousands of copies of *AB* are being reproduced regularly through printing houses, risograph, mimeograph, V-type and other methods.

A big challenge lies before the entire Party, with *AB* coming out once more on a monthly basis. The entire Party, especially the leading committees on the different levels, should ensure that important information, news and articles are transmitted promptly to the editorial staff. Also, we should work hard to reproduce and distribute *AB* to make sure that all units and members of the Party, NPA and other revolutionary mass organizations read *AB* on time. These and other concomitant steps need to be undertaken to make *AB* a more effective organ of the Party. **AB**

From the AB Editors

To make sure that all units and members of the Party, as well as mass activists, receive their copies of AB on time, leading Party units, especially, should consciously plan how to promptly reproduce and distribute AB.

It is at times unavoidable that readers of AB receive their copies way too late because of the limitations posed by the Party's clandestine communication lines. While we will continue to distribute AB through these lines, the AB Editors encourage Party leading committees to plan out ways of downloading issues of AB from the internet. Revolutionary ►



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ANG BAYAN ON THE INTERNET

The latest issue of AB, as well as all other issues since 1999 may be downloaded from the internet address:

<http://angbayan.cjb.net>

Comments, suggestions and letters may be sent to the AB editorial staff through the e-mail address:

editors@angbayan.cjb.net

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(Editorial, from p. 4)

To arrest the rapid deterioration of the people's living conditions, we must forge the strongest unity and unleash a powerful storm of protest against the US-Estrada regime and the big oil corporations. Spiralling oil prices are militating the people in their millions to make a stand and fight poverty and the oppressive Estrada regime.

The deregulation of the oil industry was finally carried out in April 1999, giving the oil companies absolute freedom to determine the prices of their products. The most recent price increase last September 12 was the 14th in the past 17 months.

With the deregulation law, the monopoly oil corporations caused the prices of their products to shoot up. Since March 1999, the prices of petroleum products have risen by 45-75%, including a 65% increase in the price of diesel that hit jeepney drivers and the common people hard. This is steeper than the 30% increase in the price of petroleum products in 1994-97.

It is sheer nonsense for the oil companies to claim that they need to raise prices in order to cover increases in the price of crude oil in the world market and the depreciation of the peso and to recover their losses as well. In fact, the three big oil corporations have an aggregate net income of P14 billion aside from accumulated retained earnings of P18.6 billion. Moreover, the owners of these corporations are among the biggest monopoly corporations in the world. In 1999, Royal Dutch Shell (owner of Pilipinas Shell) earned \$93.69 billion and Texaco (owner of Caltex Philippines), \$31.37 billion.

This reasoning exposes the thoroughly rapacious nature of these big foreign oil corporations. They cannot allow even the slightest reduction in their profits. Thus, each and every rise in production cost is immediately

passed on to the people by increasing the prices of petroleum products.

This poses an ever heavier burden on the people. Because of the unrestrained increases in the prices of petroleum products, prices of everyday commodities including sugar, soap, chicken and flour rose by 15-20%. As a result, the government can no longer meet its 5-6% inflation target.

The unrestrained increases in the prices of petroleum products are exacerbating the already unprecedented impoverishment of the Filipino people. In spite of this, the US-Estrada regime persists in serving the interests of the foreign big capitalists and domestic ruling classes. It uses the fascist state to brutally suppress struggles for wage increases and the antifeudal struggles of peasants in the countryside.

There is basis for the explosion of a widespread and intensified protest movement

Estrada fools no one with his melodrama of "imploring" the oil corporations to delay or reduce the price increases. Summoning these oil corporations' officials to Malacañang is all a show

to allow Estrada to escape blame for the oil price increases and pretend to be the hero representing the interests of the people.

In the first place, it is the reactionary government, under orders from the IMF, that accorded the oil corporations the right to increase prices under the deregulation law. The crime of raising oil prices rests squarely on both the foreign oil monopoly corporations and the bureaucrat capitalist government of Estrada. The people must make them pay.

The people are seething with anger. There is basis for the explosion of a widespread and intensified ►


◄ forces or supporters can be asked or assigned to regularly download the latest issue of AB from the internet.

The methods of reproducing copies of AB should be planned carefully. In particular, we must seriously study using new production techniques that will ensure that there are sufficient clean copies of AB that are pleasant-looking and easily read by comrades and the masses. Corollarily, a good system and machinery for distribution should be in

place to make copies of AB promptly available to its readers.

In line with this, readers who have the resources and ability to reproduce copies of AB are encouraged to do so and assist in the distribution of AB, while undertaking the necessary precautionary measures. They can link up with Party units, or with the AB editors, in order to establish coordination on this matter.

Above all, in order for AB to effectively mirror the continuing ad-

vance of the revolutionary movement nationwide and effectively respond to the needs of its readers, there should be a healthy exchange between the editors and Party units and members, mass organizations and activists. Units of the NPA, especially, are encouraged to integrate into their plans the task of sending reports and other information to the AB editors, especially on victories and advances in the realm of agrarian revolution, mass struggles and armed struggle. 

protest movement against increases in oil prices and commodities and for wage increases.

The toiling masses and other patriotic and democratic sectors must forge the utmost unity to effectively resist the unbridled oil price increases. The people must unite in their millions to muster their strength and deal heavy blows against the foreign oil corporations and the US-Estrada regime. It would be relevant to learn appropriate lessons from the victorious struggles of workers in France and other European countries and from the Filipino people's successful struggles since the 1970s.

It is very important to stress the fundamental question of the diametrically opposed interests of the people, on the one hand, and of the foreign big oil corporations and the puppet state, on the other. Raking in superprofits can only be done by the monopoly corporations by wreaking havoc on the people. Thus, in order for the people to arrest the further degradation of their lives, they need to take action and resolutely resist oil price increases.

This struggle is closely linked to the struggle against the Estrada government. The reactionary state is the principal defender of the interests of the foreign big corporations. It should be made accountable for implementing policies that give rise to the worst forms of imperialist plunder and the unprecedented economic and political crisis.

The continuous increases in oil prices can only be resolved fundamentally by nationalizing the oil industry and liberating it from the clutches of profit-hungry foreign monopoly corporations. This can be achieved only by a new democratic government brought forth by revolutionary struggle and built on the ruins of the old rotten system. **AB**

OPEC and the oil giants

The price of crude oil skyrocketed to \$35 per barrel this September as a result of the decision of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) to reduce oil production starting March. This is the highest price of crude oil in the past 10 years.

OPEC's curtailment of crude oil supplies to raise prices is definitely injurious to the people. But we must expose, condemn and oppose more vigorously the big oil monopoly corporations and the imperialist powers that protect them.

OPEC was formed in 1960 to prevent the decline of crude oil prices by controlling its supply in the market. Presently it is composed of Saudi Arabia, Iraq, United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Iran, Qatar, Nigeria, Libya, Algeria, Indonesia and Venezuela. Especially through Saudi Arabia (one of the largest producers of crude oil and a political base of the US in the Middle East), the decisions of OPEC are strongly influenced by US imperialism.

These countries are relatively backward and rely principally on

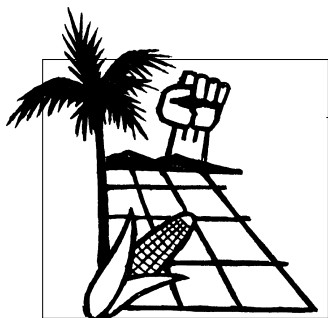
their export of crude oil. Despite rich resources, these countries are wallowing in crisis due mainly to their long history of colonial or unequal trade.

Their oil refining capability, if it exists, is low. OPEC countries only contribute around 10% of the world oil refining capacity. More than 60% is controlled by big capitalist countries.

It is the imperialist countries and the big oil monopoly corporations that rake in superprofits from the oil industry that we must condemn and oppose more vigorously. They control the exploration, drilling, refining and market distribution of petroleum products.

Because of their monopoly control over the oil industry, especially by Exxon-Mobil, Royal Dutch-Shell and BP-Amoco, they are able to unrestrainedly push up the prices of petroleum products and pocket superprofits. The overall revenue in 1999 of the top six oil refiners (\$477 trillion) was bigger than the combined value of the GNPs of the 11 member countries of OPEC (*see table*).

Oil company	Profit in hundred million dollars (1999)	OPEC member country	GNP in hundred million dollars (1999)
Exxon Mobil	163,881	Saudi Arabia	143,361
Royal Dutch Shell	105,366	Indonesia	119,544
BP Amoco	83,566	Iran	102,000
Total Fina Elf	44,990	Venezuela	85,963
Sinopec	41,883	Iraq	60,000
Elf Aquitaine	37,918	UAE	47,673
Texaco	35,690	Algeria	46,455
ENI	34,091	Nigeria	37,882
Chevron	32,676	Libya	25,000
PDVSA	32,648	Kuwait	18,724
Total	612,709		460,904



CRISIS IN THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR

Liberalization in agriculture

Aggravating the suffering of the peasant masses

Proof of the Estrada government's utter subservience to US imperialism is its all-out implementation of antipeople and destructive policies under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade-World Trade Organization (GATT-WTO).

Despite the widespread devastation wrought on agriculture by the scuttling of tariffs and the abolition of trade restrictions, the US-Estrada regime persists with its liberalization agenda. It has refused to impose needed restrictions such as the setting of import quotas or import bans on selected agricultural products to temporarily stem the steadily rising flood of cheap imports in the sector. The US-Estrada regime has no plans to renege on its obligations under GATT and it is set to continuously lower and eventually abolish tariffs on imported agricultural products.

Local agricultural products, owing to their high production costs and high prices, are unable to compete with cheap imports. This intensifies the crisis wrought by the cartels' practice of depressing farmgate prices of rice. The reactionary government has even reduced subsidies for the sector and now deprives small farmers of "agricultural services".

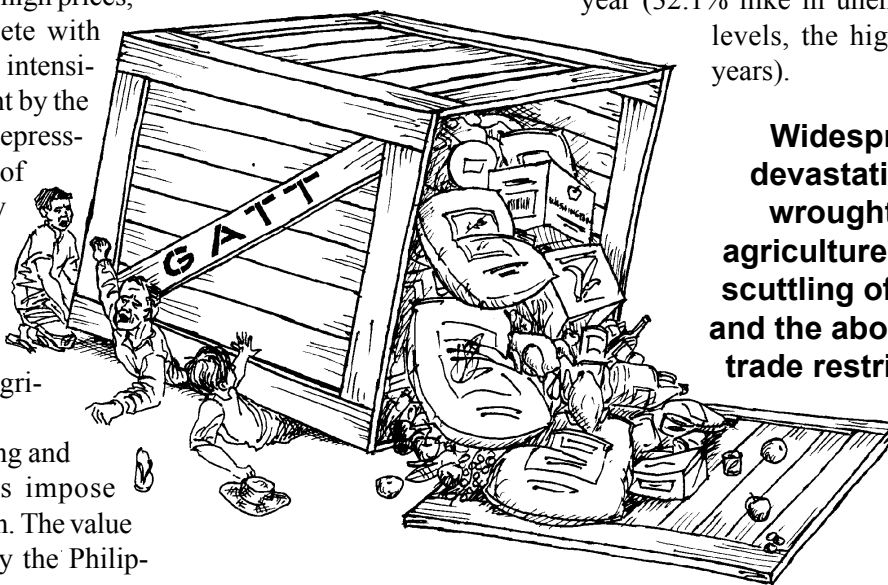
Laws on patenting and ownership of seeds impose added misery and ruin. The value of seeds imported by the Philip-

pines runs to the millions of dollars and further raises farmers' production costs. "Miracle varieties" have deliberately been rendered sterile to force farmers to buy seeds every planting season. These crops are highly dependent on expensive chemical fertilizers and pesticides that are also imported from other countries.

On the other hand, imperialist countries led by the US have been engaging in predatory pricing mainly by extending government subsidies to farmers with the aim of overwhelming their competitors and dominating the world market. While aggressively pushing for full liberalization in the semicolonies, it adopts protectionism in its own country including the outright banning of certain agricultural imports or the imposition of import restrictions.

Because of the decline of agriculture, unemployment rates in the sector have risen by 10.1%. Up to 1.3 million jobs in agriculture have been lost from July 1999 to July 2000 alone, representing the biggest factor in the precipitous rise of joblessness this year (32.1% hike in unemployment levels, the highest in 10 years).

Widespread devastation is wrought on agriculture by the scuttling of tariffs and the abolition of trade restrictions



Five years of GATT

Five years have passed since the reactionary government implemented the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) that imposed trade liberalization in agriculture. Although this is not the first time trade was liberalized in the sector, it has wrought unprecedented ruin and suffering on millions of Filipino farmers. It has intensified the crisis brought about by the backward system of agricultural production and the widespread oppression and poverty in the countryside.

Under GATT, agricultural production went on a steady, steep decline due mainly to the influx of cheap agricultural imports in the domestic market. From 1995-98, it recorded a measly 0.28% annual growth rate. There was a much-ballyhooed 6.49% growth in 1999 (the highest in 10 years), but this reflects, in reality, a mere recovery from the worst effects of El Niño.

From January to July 2000, the sector declined by 3.8%, contrary to a projected 2.49% growth. Gross value of production of major crops (rice, corn, coconut, sugar cane and other cash crops) fell by 9.33%. The production and value of other crops (vegetables in the main) dropped by 17.82%. Worst hit was the production of onions (-70.30%), coconut (-25.26%), sugar cane (-29.6%), cabbage (-30.67%) and mung beans (-19.26%).

The first year GATT was implemented, the agricultural trade deficit reached \$42.24 million (P1.056 billion based on a \$1=P25 exchange rate). In the next four years, it ballooned 30 times over, reaching \$700 million (P35 billion at \$1=P45). Rice importations grew tenfold in the same period. In the first quarter of this year, the National Food Authority (NFA) imported up to 600,000 metric tons (mt) of rice. The NFA also imported 350,000 mt of corn in 1999 despite the surplus corn production in Mindanao. Similarly, an estimated 500,000 mt of cheap corn and 151,000 mt of cheap sugar will be imported this year, with both figures higher than the minimum access volume set for products with low tariffs.

The US takes the lead in dumping cheap agricultural products in the country as it aims to alleviate its

Under GATT, agricultural production went on a steady, steep decline due mainly to the influx of cheap agricultural imports in the domestic market.

Privatization of the NFA

The Estrada regime is scrambling to do away with all subsidies provided by the reactionary government to the agricultural sector. In October 1999, Estrada signed a \$175 million (P7 billion)-loan agreement with the Asian Development Bank conditioned on the privatization of the National Food Authority (NFA) and the free importation of rice by the private sector. The loan agreement also pegged the price of palay bought by the government from farmers while raising rice prices; and limited the volume of palay procurement by the NFA to the equivalent of a 30-day buffer stock.

In past years, the NFA bought only about 0.2% of the farmers' total harvest. Subsidies for fertilizers and other inputs have also been removed. Thus, Filipino farmers have among the highest production costs in Asia.

Worse, it is the NFA itself that takes the lead in raising rice prices. In January, the government announced a P100-increase per cavan of NFA rice. The following day, the cartel (composed of big capitalists controlling palay procurement and the rice retail trade) followed suit with a P200-P250 increase per cavan. By privatizing the NFA, the reactionary Estrada government is completely surrendering the entire rice industry to the cartels, giving them free rein to push up prices as they wish, to the detriment of the people (as what occurred in 1995 when the price of rice per kilo rose from P16 to P26-P30). **AB**

crisis of overproduction. This includes 49,000 mt of rice dumped in the first half of 2000 under the commodity loan program. The US freely dumped \$10 million (P450 million) worth of the corn-substitute soybean meal and touted it as aid from US imperialism for small farmers under US Public Law 480 and the Agriculture and Fisheries Modernization Act. This year, the US is set to dump 216,000 mt of wheat in the Philippines.

Although agricultural products are the country's second major export, they constitute only 4.7% of overall exports. Coconut oil and bananas comprise the biggest share. The country last exported rice in 1992 and corn in 1991. **AB**

Amid the US-Estrada regime's pretentions

The coconut industry continues to plummet

Contrary to the US-Estrada regime's claim of a boom in the country's coconut industry, the latter is in fact suffering a continuous decline. The regime consciously prevents the industry's development to give way to projects in line with the liberalization of the national economy.

From 13.182 million metric tons (mt) in 1997, the volume of coconut production dropped to 11.597 million mt (a 12.02% decline) in 1998. It further fell by 9.43% in 1999. Along with the decline in volume, the total value of coconut production continued to drop towards the end of the 1990s. Since last year, total value has declined by 25.26%.

The continuous deterioration of the coconut industry, the source of the country's primary agricultural export, also caused a 33.06% slump in aggregate orders for agricultural products (from \$1.22 billion in 1998 to \$817.193 million in 1999, according to government statistics).

National earnings from coconut products have suffered a tremendous decrease. Last year's \$368.1 million income was 51.03% lower than 1998's \$751.742 million. This year, coconut oil export fell by 57.31% and the value of exported copra meal/cake by 56.04%.

The government boasts that coconut oil still ranks third among the country's main exports. But it earns far less revenues compared to electronics and garments. In

July for instance,
it accounted

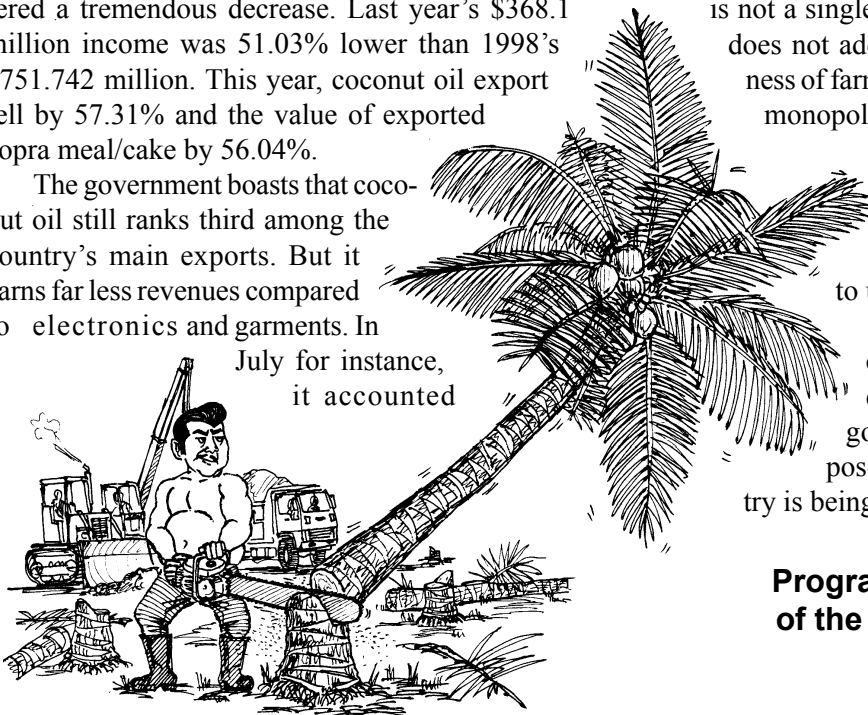
for only 1.8% of the major exports of the country.

In an attempt to conceal its roots, the government has long attributed the deterioration of the coconut industry to the El Niño phenomenon and typhoons that hit the country.

The real cause of the coconut industry's deterioration is the regime's unrestrained enforcement of conversion of agricultural lands into mines, golf courses and subdivisions, among others. The Mining Act of 1995 which gives way to the wholesale destruction of forests and agricultural lands outrightly violates RA 8048 or the Coconut Tree Preservation Act of 1995 which prohibits the cutting of coconut trees. More fundamentally, coconut production remains backward. Despite the regime's declaration that 70% of the supposed 3.31 million hectares of coconut farms in the country are underutilized and unproductive, it is not taking any serious measure to develop it.

It is not in the regime's plan to develop the country's agriculture, including the coconut industry. Programs for the development of the coconut industry are all for show. In "Maunlad na Niyugan Tugon sa Kahirapan", a part of the regime's "Agrikulturang Makamasa" program, there is not a single mention of land reform. The program does not address the age-old question of landlessness of farmers and the continued landgrabbing and monopoly by landlords. The regime's attempt to include a provision allowing 100% foreign ownership of land in the country in its proposed amendments to the constitution proves its lack of intention to undertake genuine land reform.

Amid the severe problem facing the coconut industry, Estrada devotes his energies to having Cojuangco regain his ill-gotten coco levy fund. Worse, the supposed rehabilitation of the coconut industry is being used to camouflage his maneuvers. **AB**



Programs for the development of the coconut industry are all for show.

Cojuangco-Estrada coco levy plot

“Sarap Maging Barkada!”

With his lackey Estrada in charge, Eduardo ‘Danding’ Cojuangco is confident that he will recoup the ill-gotten coco levy fund. The duo is plotting the most effective way for Cojuangco to finally reclaim this fund now estimated at P120 billion. The final plan will be laid out by means of an executive order (EO) from Malacañang.

Cojuangco is now reaping the fruits of being one of the primary financiers of Estrada’s candidacy in 1998. Estrada’s electoral victory has likewise put him in power.

A story of embezzlement

The coco levy fund was collected from coconut farmers at an average of P60 per 100 kilos of copra or its equivalent from 1972-83 by virtue of Presidential Decree 276 issued by the late dictator Marcos. The dictatorship collected the fund through a board in the Philippine Coconut Authority (PCA) composed entirely of members of the Coconut Producers’ Federation of the Philippines (COCOFED). Posing as an organization of small farmers, COCOFED is a federation of the biggest coconut plantation owners. The coco levy was deposited interest-free in the United Coconut Planters Bank (UCPB) which was then managed by Cojuangco. Cojuangco got hold of the fund through his control over the PCA-COCOFED-UCPB, with Marcos’ support and in connivance with then defense minister Juan Ponce Enrile and Ma. Clara Lobregat who both held high positions in the PCA-COCOFED-UCPB. He used the fund to acquire 47% of San Miguel Corporation (SMC) shares.

In 1986, the Aquino regime sequestered Cojuangco’s shares in SMC, UCPB and other firms he acquired using the coco levy fund.

When Estrada assumed the presidency, however, he quickly appointed Cojuangco minions to the SMC board using the shares “sequestered” by the government. The appointees reinstated Cojuangco to the board and even elected him chairman.

Tricky maneuvers

The EO on the coco levy fund that is being concocted by the Estrada regime is one big ruse being played on the people. According to Estrada’s proposed EO, 27% of the government-sequestered SMC shares (amounting to P50 billion), shall be “given” to some 3.6 million coconut farmers on condition that the remaining 20% (estimated at P30 billion) shall be transferred to Cojuangco’s control and that cases pending against him for stealing the coco levy fund shall be dismissed.

Although the 47% SMC shares are officially under sequestration by

the reactionary government, they are practically at Cojuangco’s disposal. He merely wants to legitimize his control over the shares through the EO being prepared by Estrada, who is sure to cook it up to Cojuangco’s liking. It is important for Cojuangco to fully recover the shares, sell and liquidate them to raise funds for his Laban ng Masang Pilipino party’s bid in the coming elections. He will likewise invest the money to expand his businesses.

Cojuangco’s turnover of 27% of the SMC shares to coconut farmers is a big zarzuela. It is a move that would never benefit the farmers, the fund’s legitimate owners. The regime will actually sell the shares and use the proceeds to put up a trust fund supposedly intended to rehabilitate the coconut industry.

The trust fund’s projected P5 billion annual profit shall be divided thus:

- 60% shall be allotted to the rehabilitation of the coconut industry which is controlled and monopolized by Cojuangco;
- 20% amounting to P1 billion per annum will go to COCOFED, also controlled by Cojuangco;
- 18% shall be reinvested in the trust fund’s principal account; and
- 2% shall cover the expenses of the committee that will be ►



Biotechnology

New instrument of imperialist exploitation

The Estrada regime and foreign monopoly agrochemical companies are now aggressively pushing for the use of seeds produced through biotechnology.

US imperialism conspires with them with its use of loans and technical assistance to push the use of these seeds. In July, a P280 million-loan was approved by the US government for the Philippine Agriculture and Fisheries Biotechnology Program. This is the latest agreement signed by the Philippines to promote biotechnology in agriculture and fisheries.

Biotechnology is a branch of science that applies technology in using organisms to create various products. At present, imperialist agrochemical companies are taking the lead in using biotechnology, especially the new and controversial science of genetic engineering or the manipulation of genes to create new organisms. The

process produces genetically modified organisms or GMOs.

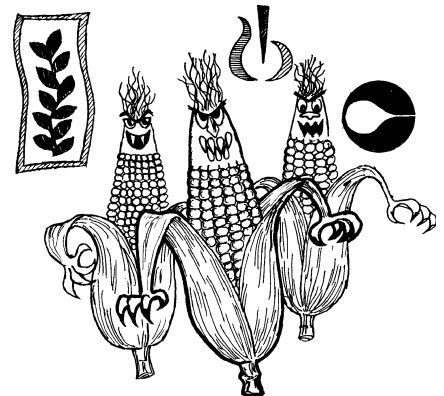
Pushing Bt corn. In the Philippines, the Department of Agriculture (DA) is pushing in particular, the commercial cultivation of a GMO called Bt corn, a corn variety carrying a gene from the *Bacillus thuringiensis* (Bt) bacterium that creates a toxin lethal to the Asian corn borer pest. Bt corn thus carries a pesticide that kills this insect.

To prepare for its propagation, Bt corn has undergone field testing in General Santos City. Other field tests are set to be conducted in northern and southern Mindanao and in northern Luzon. The field tests are being administered by the government and Pioneer Hi-Bred, a subsidiary of the US' Pioneer Hi-Bred International and Agro-seed Corp., both of which are subsidiaries of Monsanto, an American corporation and the world's largest seed company and creator of Bt corn.

The campaign aims to convert 1.7 million farmer families nationwide

who depend on corn production into a market for Bt corn seeds. At present, there are about 2.7 million hectares of corn land in the country. Fifteen percent (15%) of the population eat corn as a staple. Meanwhile, 85% of corn produced in the Philippines is used as an ingredient in making animal feeds. The Philippines consumes up to 5.3 million metric tons of corn per year.

The giant agrochemical corporations sell up to US\$1.3 billion worth of corn seeds to farmers worldwide. With such huge earnings from the sale of GMOs, these monopolies are in a tight race to create Bt rice (that will



◀ formed to administer the trading of the shares.

It is clear that the "liberated" coco levy fund will still end up in the hands of Cojuangco and his cohorts. In fact, in preparing the EO, it is Cojuangco who is being consulted by the Estrada camp instead of the small coconut farmers. Estrada has even claimed that the coco levy was collected from Cojuangco and not from poor coconut farmers. Estrada also turns a blind eye to the cases pending against Cojuangco in the Sandiganbayan for his appropriation of the coco levy fund. To guarantee his recovery of the 27% of SMC shares that will supposedly be given to the coconut farmers, Cojuangco intends to install Estrada himself as chairman of the committee that will administer the trust fund. Other trusted henchmen of Cojuangco's in

the reactionary government and the COCOFED will also be appointed to the committee.

Estrada's signing of the EO has been scheduled and postponed several times over (in December of last year and in January, March, June and July of this year) both because Cojuangco has been demanding changes in its provisions and because of the vehement opposition of farmers who continue to expose the Cojuangco-Estrada conspiracy.

WE MUST continuously expose this conspiracy and the rotteness of the present regime. We must intensify the struggle against the Estrada regime's continued deceit committed not only against the small coconut farmers but against all oppressed and exploited people. **AB**

be resistant to the stem borer pest) and control the worldwide trading of rice and corn seeds.

Pro-imperialist, anti-farmer. It is ironic that Bt corn is being rammed down the throats of farmers at a time when the Philippines is enjoying a bumper harvest of corn. Mindanao and Isabela alone have produced supplies of the grain exceeding the country's needs. Neither is the Asian corn borer pest a major problem in the Philippines.

Bt corn is being pushed, not to improve corn production, but to eventually overrun seeds currently in use in the country and enable Monsanto to monopolize the sale of Bt corn and other company products to farmers. Aside from the DA's aggressive promotion of Bt corn, the genetically modified organism can easily spread across other corn fields with pollen being carried by winds or insects to ordinary corn varieties.

The introduction of Bt corn is no different from the massive influx of high-yielding varieties (HYV) of rice and corn in various countries in the 1960s and 1970s under the so-called "green revolution". HYVs are none other than seeds produced by companies like Monsanto and Cargill, that yield bountiful harvests only after huge doses of expensive imported chemical pesticides and fertilizers that are often products of these same monopoly corporations.

Up to a billion farmers worldwide subjected to the "green revolution" became dependent on the use of such pesticides and fertilizers, out of which monopolies reaped gigantic profits, indigenous seeds were wiped out, farmers were buried deep in debt and farmlands were gradually poisoned. In the end, this led to diminishing harvests.

With HYVs no longer profitable to imperialists, monopoly corporations have now turned to creating and pushing genetically modified organisms such as Bt corn in cahoots with puppet states and imperialist funding agencies.

The propagation of GMOs will be a reprise of farmers' experience with the "green revolution" because of the tight integration of the seeds, biotechnology, food, pesticide and fertilizer monopoly industries.

The "Roundup-Ready Soybean", for instance, one of the leading genetically modified crops, was purposely developed by Monsanto to require a double dose of the herbicide glyphosphate (more commonly known by its brand name Roundup) in order to yield commercial quantities. Roundup is also a product of Monsanto.

It therefore comes as no surprise that in 1998, sales of Monsanto products rose by 23%, mainly due to a 25%

increase in the volume of Roundup sold and the tripling of the area of farmland planted to Monsanto's GMO products worldwide.

Monsanto and other agrochemical monopolies also produce "terminator seeds" that germinate or grow fully only upon the infusion of chemical products developed by these companies. Farmers are thus obliged to buy seeds and chemicals every planting season.

Food security? Drumbreakers of GMOs like Bt corn tout them as the solution to poor harvests and widespread hunger and poverty in the countryside.

Instead of promoting food security, however, the widespread cultivation of GMOs and the resulting dependence on products of agrochemical monopoly corporations will bloat farm expenses, aggravate usury and other forms of feudal and semifeudal exploitation, exacerbate poverty among farmers and thus worsen malnutrition and hunger in the countryside. **AB**

A danger to the people and the environment

Monopolies push for the use of GMOs without complying with health and safety standards just to reap big profits. This poses many risks to the people and the environment.

In the case of Bt corn, there are studies that indicate that it is toxic as well to humans and causes cancer. Consuming GMOs may also cause allergies. GMOs that carry antibiotic properties may lead to the emergence of bacteria resistant to currently used medicines and result in epidemics.

Likewise, insects may eventually develop resistance to the pesticide in Bt corn. Instead of controlling their numbers, this may lead to the emergence of "superpests" that may devastate cornfields and cause local supplies of this grain to plummet. This will be seized as a pretext for imperialists to dump their surplus corn and corn-substitutes in the country.

Insects beneficial to plants may also die. In Thailand, for instance, 30% of bees around a field testing area for Bt cotton perished. In Germany, Austria and Luxembourg, the Bt maize variety "Windsor" created by the giant Swiss agrochemical company Novartis has been banned because of its destructive effect on certain insects and on soil fauna. **AB**

Addressing the people's interests

Key to the further advance of the revolutionary movement in Southern Tagalog

Despite the deployment of tens of thousands of reactionary military troops in Southern Tagalog, the revolutionary movement in the region continues to advance and gain strength. It has boldly declared that Oplan Makabayan has failed.

In fact, guerrilla fronts were able to consolidate themselves and new ones have been built in the region. Southern Tagalog has surpassed its 1987 record with regards to the area covered and influenced by the revolutionary forces. It now operates in 10 provinces that are divided into several guerrilla fronts.

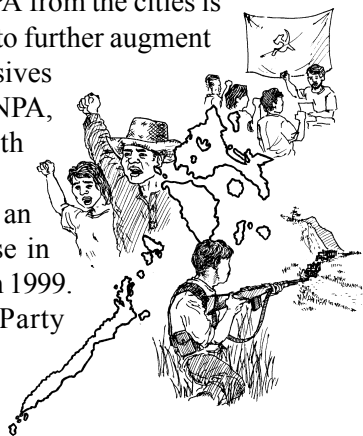
The reactionary government's pretension that it could destroy the revolutionary movement is a big illusion. The revolutionary movement will continue to gain strength because of its all-out advocacy of the interests of the masses. Mass campaigns, agrarian struggles and tactical offensives will reap even more victories.

The revolutionary movement in the region gains strength

The number of organized masses in the countryside increased by 32%. Thirty percent (30%) of this are mass activists. From its level in 1998, the number of organizing groups increased by 38%. Meanwhile, the number of organizing committees increased by 43% in 1999. Mass organizations are far more solid now than they were in 1997.

The number of barrios where the NPA could effectively operate increased by 46% in 1999. The number of worker and student youth joining the NPA from the cities is also significant. There is a need to further augment weapons through tactical offensives to respond to the needs of the NPA, which continues to expand with new fighters.

In the meantime, there was an overall increase of 19% increase in Party membership in the region in 1999. Eighty-six percent (86%) of Party members are in the countryside.



Launching agrarian revolution and mass campaigns

The revolutionary movement implements the minimum program of agrarian revolution on a wide scale. In Western Batangas, farmers were able to pressure a landlord to agree to the planting of food crops on land that was exclusively planted to sugarcane.

In North and South Quezon, thousands of farmers benefited from the lowering of the *resicada*. Meanwhile, a farmworkers' movement to demand wage increases that began in three sitios in a town in Occidental Mindoro has spread to several barrios in four of the province's towns. Their P80-daily wage was raised to P120. Farmers' also waged a successful struggle for wage increases in a town in southern Oriental Mindoro. In the interior areas of the island, there is a continuous drive to increase production. These are only a few of the victorious antifeudal struggles of the people in Southern Tagalog.

On the other hand, the lives, property

NEWS FROM SOUTHERN TAGALOG

NPA RAIDS COAST GUARD DETACHMENT

Red fighters aboard bancas raided a Philippine Coast Guard detachment in Barangay Sabang, Burdeos, Quezon at around 7:30 a.m. on September 24.

The NPA swiftly seized three M16s from the Coast Guard detachment led by Petty Officer Nestor Cruz. No one was hurt in the raid that was conducted without firing a single shot.

BUS COMPANY IN BATANGAS PUNISHED

NPA guerrillas raided the Jam Transit terminal in Lemery, Batangas on August 27. The NPA disarmed two security guards of their 12-gauge shotguns before setting fire to two air-conditioned buses owned by the company. Damage was estimated to have reached P7.5 million.

The punitive action was launched because of the company's stubborn refusal to comply with its tax obligations to the revolutionary movement.

◀ and livelihood of the people are being destroyed by “development” projects and widespread land use conversion perpetrated by conniving bureaucrats and local and foreign capitalists. Examples of these are the Malampaya Development Project in Palawan, South Luzon Tollway Extension Project (Batangas to Quezon), Hopewell Coal-fired Power Plant in Pagbilao, Quezon and many others.

Rampant land use conversion has also led to the widespread displacement of the people, as in the case of Hacienda Looc in Nasugbu, Batangas and the Tourism Development Project of the Zobel-Ayala and Locsin families in Puerto Galera, Oriental Mindoro.

Tactical offensives

Under Oplan Makabayan, military operations that have caused further wanton violations of human rights and the rules of war have intensified. In April, the military’s execution of seven civilians in Oriental Mindoro pushed the people to oppose and resist the fascist battalion until the regime was compelled to remove the 49th IB as well as its umbrella unit Task Force Seagull.

The NPA launches tactical offensives against notorious military and police units to punish the enemy for their crimes against the people. The tactical offensives in 1999 as well as these past months prove that the people’s interests are addressed and that the US-Estrada regime’s counterrevolutionary campaign is futile. These also shattered the military conservatism that prevailed in the entire region in 1998 after the momentum unleashed by the NPA’s victorious offensives in 1997.

The tactical offensive in Calauag, Quezon against two detachments manned by police and DENR operatives-extortionists; the raid in Sta. Maria, Laguna where Red fighters did not fire a single shot; and the punitive action taken against the PNP Special Action Force in Victoria, Oriental Mindoro were all victorious. These are only a few of the latest NPA offensives that reaped not only more firearms but, more importantly, inspired the people of Southern Tagalog to further support and cherish the people’s army.

Continued advancement

The revolutionary movement in Southern Tagalog will further advance as the country’s social crisis further worsens. The people can not see even a tinge of hope in the US-Estrada regime. It is only in the revolutionary movement that the people find hope.

For every victorious tactical offensive, antifeudal struggle and mass campaign launched, it becomes ever clearer to the people that the revolutionary movement addresses their interests. Thus, their desire to join the struggle and achieve victory becomes even more ardent. **AB**

Seriously ailing health system



The US-Estrada regime does not provide health services to the Filipino people, although health is a basic social service. Instead, the regime’s policies, such as privatization and commercialization, deprive the people of these services and worsen the country’s health care delivery system.

Big foreign and local capitalists are the ones benefiting from the so-called “market-oriented” health reform programs and policies.

The following are proof of the reactionary regime’s antipeople hold on the country’s health care delivery system:

Liberalization. The regime allows the free entry of medicines and drug companies into the country. The prices of imported medicines are usually exorbitantly marked up. Besides, the influx of food made from GMOs (genetically modified organisms) presents added dangers to the people’s health.

Privatization. Instead of providing affordable and quality health service to the people, the government is selling leading hospitals and health institutions like the Philippine General Hospital, National Kidney and Transplant Institute, Philippine Heart Center, Philippine Children’s Medical Center and the Lung Center of the Philippines (which burned down) to businessmen. The lot occupied by the National Center for Mental Health has also been put on the auction block, with plans to transfer the hospital in an area between Pililla, Rizal and Mabitac, Laguna, too remote for the majority of patients and their relatives. Government profits from the sale will be used to pay its debts and fund antipeople projects.

Commercialization. Together with privatization comes a near 50% increase in the cost of health services in 1999. There was also a 20% increase in the prices of medicines and medical supplies. At the Ormoc district hospital, prices of medicines are double that in other drug stores.

Even the DOH (Department of Health)’s free immunization program for children has suffered budget cuts, further limiting facilities and personnel geared towards the program.

Oppression of health workers. Oppression of health workers is a sign of the regime’s abandonment of people’s health. Estrada disregards the workers’ demand for an ▶

Antipeople health programs

Numerous antipeople laws and health programs are neither already being enforced or are set for implementation by the regime to cut expenses on health service and reap further profits even as it feigns concern for the people's health.

Executive Order (EO) 102 of May 1999. This stipulates the streamlining of the DOH. In its first phase of implementation which covered the central DOH office, more than 1,000 workers were displaced. Targeted for budget cuts during the second phase are special hospitals, regional hospitals and medical centers, the Bureau of Food and Drugs and the National Quarantine Office. Attached agencies of the DOH will be targeted during the last phase. This scheme also provides for the corporatization of public hospitals.

The EO also transforms the DOH into a mere "regulatory body" conducting health research and information dissemination. With the few remaining state hospitals set for privatization, the DOH has passed on to the private sector the full responsibility of providing health services.

House Bill 5125. This provides for the transfer of the staff and functions of the central DOH to the RHOs (which will also be dismantled eventually). Unfortunately, because the Estrada regime has put the local governments in dire straits by manipulating their Internal Revenue Allotments, they have very few resources to spend on public health care.

EO 197. This policy which allows hospitals to hike their fees by 20% or more, will further deprive the poor of access to health services.

DOH's "Lingap para sa Mahirap." This program will allegedly provide health services to the 100 "poorest among the poor" families in every city and province. It is obviously all for show because it does not truly address the issue of poverty which lies at the root of the people's dismal state of health. **AB**

◀ increase of their meager wage, strips them of their benefits such as amelioration and hazard pay and delays payment of their overtime pay, night shift differential, holiday pay and housing allowance. Health workers are also victims of devolution or the transfer of DOH control to the Regional Health Offices (RHO). Hundreds of workers were laid off as a result.

Corruption-ridden DOH. Anomalies in this agency involving local government and DOH officials are rampant. On August 21, Zamboanga del Sur health workers filed a corruption case against the governor, vice governor, the mayor of Pagadian, two provincial board members and other officials of the RHO. As of August 17, more than 500 health workers in Mindanao had yet to receive their

salaries and allowances for the month of July amounting to P5.3 million. Officials are suspected of profiting from the workers' withheld salaries.

The government slashes the scanty health budget yearly. The budget has steadily declined from P13 billion in 1998 to P11.3 billion in 1999 and P10.8 billion for the year 2000. From 3.02% in 1997, only 2.83% of the national budget was allocated for health in 1998. The figure is now a mere 2.5%. In 1997, the country spent only 3.5% of its GNP or P88.4 billion for health. This is far below the World Health Organization's standard of 5% for a backward country. Of the P88.4-billion expenditure, 46% was shouldered by the people and only 39% by the government.

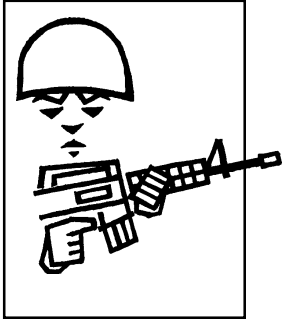
SYMPTOMS OF SOCIAL ILL

EVERYDAY, 70 die of tuberculosis (TB);
740 are infected with TB;
170 become afflicted with malaria;
10 women die from complications; of pregnancy and childbirth;
16 die of respiratory diseases;
8 children die of measles;
300 infants die of common diseases like pneumonia, bronchitis and influenza;
17 children go blind; **WHILE**
1.3 million children are afflicted with kidney disease due to Vitamin A deficiency;
12% of the population were undernourished in 1999;
20% of the population are malnourished **AND**
1% of the population suffer from psychological illnesses

Of the more than 20,000 licensed doctors in the country, only about 20% are employed by the government. The remaining 80% are either in private hospitals or clinics or in other countries. The number of public health workers keeps getting smaller as well in the face of government austerity measures. It is evident that the people are being deprived of the health care they deserve. Availing of the more expensive services offered by the private sector is even more difficult.

Health services provided by the state continue to deteriorate despite widespread diseases and epidemics. The people's health problems cannot be resolved unless the disease that ails society is remedied through intense revolutionary struggle. **AB**

FASCIST STATE ON A RAMPAGE



In defense of ruling class interests, the fascist US-Estrada regime unabashedly continues its Marcos-style, all-out counterrevolutionary war

against the people and the revolutionary movement.

As recently as the first week of September, Estrada brazenly refused to sign a document supporting the creation of an international human rights court. This shows that the reactionary regime is hellbent on continuing its fascist campaign to wreak havoc and violence against the people in order to crush the revolutionary struggle.

As can be expected, wanton violations of human rights by the US-Estrada are on the rise.

On August 10, 11 farmers (Rizaldy and Ricky Montemayor, Ariel, Renato and Eduardo Magpoc, Franco Braga, Randy Vergara, Melvin and Junjun Guzman, Ernesto Padilla and a certain Felix), all hailing from Orion, Bataan, were made to lie face-down

by 24th IB troops led by Lt. Col. Arthur Ong. They were forced to admit that they were NPA fighters. When none of them confessed, they were instead accused of stealing goats. Unsatisfied, the fascists took away their bolos, wallets, cooking pans, flashlights and clothes. The farmers were kicked, hit with rifle butts, forced to eat soil and subjected to psychological and sexual abuse by the soldiers.

On July 7, the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (ISAFP) illegally arrested Juanito Pabuna in San Pedro, Laguna. Pabuna was allegedly responsible for making the land mine used in the successful NPA ambush of 502nd Bde troops in June. The ISAFP planted a .45 pistol on his person so they could charge him with illegal possession of firearms. They detained him for a week before presenting him to the media.

On the morning of June 7, 31st IB troops encircled an NPA group in Camarines Norte. Comrade Florinda Piñon, 25, who was six months pregnant, was shot by the fascists on the thigh and kicked in the abdomen, resulting in the death of her unborn child. The butchers brought her to a military hospital only on June 8 and did not immediately remove the dead fetus from her womb. **AB**

Corporatization of public hospitals

In order to slash budget allocations for health service in line with privatization, the Estrada government is implementing the corporatization scheme under Executive Order 102.

Accordingly, public hospitals will be operated by Hospital Corporate Boards whose responsibility is to ensure that hospitals earn profits. Meanwhile, government subsidies to hospitals are being continuously reduced and will eventually be withdrawn.

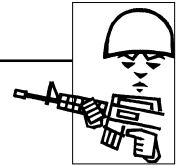
Some public hospitals like the National Kidney and Trans-

plant Institute have already been corporatized. At present, only 24% of the institute's total budget comes from the government.

Patients are charged for every service they receive. Services that patients have long been paying for like laboratory tests, x-rays and others now cost even more. Fabella hospital, where there used to be no charge for deliveries, now charges P3,500. Quirino Memorial Medical Center now charges P800 for a normal delivery and P1,500 for a caesarian delivery. Both services also used to be provided for free. Further-

more, health workers' benefits and other rights are sure to be imperilled by corporatization. The Department of Budget and Management recently suspended benefits for health workers provided for by the Magna Carta for Public Health Workers.

Other hospitals in line for corporatization are the Don Mariano Marcos Memorial Hospital, Jose Reyes Memorial Medical Center, East Avenue Medical Center, Philippine Orthopedic Center, Roxas Memorial Provincial Hospital, Ilocos Teaching and Regional Medical Center and the Davao Medical Center. **AB**



VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND CONTEMPT FOR THE RULES OF WAR (JUNE - SEPTEMBER 2000)

September 8: Two human rights volunteers and their two friends were abducted, illegally detained and tortured by members of the 8th Scout Ranger Co. in Quezon. One of them remains missing.

September 5: Troops belonging to the 74th IB arbitrarily accused Chariza “Ka Real” Lloqorido of being a New People’s Army (NPA) leader and of involvement in cases of bus burning in Southern Tagalog after she was captured in Mulanay, Quezon.

August 22: Sheryll “Ka Andrea” Arcilla was slapped with trumped-up charges of multiple murder and multiple frustrated murder after she was captured in a firefight between the NPA and the AFP in Mapalad, Isabela on July 16.

August 17: Three Manobos were killed and 100 others were evicted from Sitio Dacupil, Renebon, Tagkawayan, North Cotobato by armed goons employed by Jabal Mining Development Corp., which has plans to conduct mining activities in Dacupil

August 12: The AFP branded Alberto “Ka Mencio” Acerdin as the leader of “NPA Guerilla Front 3” in Bohol and charged him with rebellion, homicide and attempted homicide

July 27: Three young women were abducted by the CAGU, branded as NPA members and illegally detained in a videoke house in Monkayo, Compostela Valley.

July 25: More than 1,000 police and goons employed by the LRT management attacked its 1,000 striking workers.

July 24: 119 demonstrators were wounded, 35 were arrested and one was declared missing after the Manila police attacked rallyists who demonstrated against Estrada’s State of the Nation Address.

July 19: The 303rd Bde barred Comrade Bonifacio “Ka Pagat” Pasakan’s relatives from retrieving his remains and according him a decent burial. Ka Pagat died in a firefight between the AFP and the NPA in Tayasan, Negros Occidental.

July 3: Four workers were violently arrested by members of the Southern Police District in a rally against oil price increases.

July 2: The 801st Bde killed a 10-year-old boy when it strafed his home in Sitio Candiis, Kauswagan, Trinidad, Bohol.

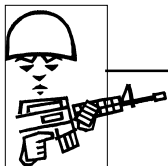
NPA indicts parties involved in Mawab 4 massacre

The New People’s Army-Merardo Arce Command (MAC) of Southern Mindanao formally indicted eight officials and soldiers of the Philippine Army, two paramilitary forces and four mining executives in the region who were involved in the massacre of the Mawab 4. The Mawab 4, comprising Comrade Godofredo “Paking” Guimbaolibot, Comrade Rolando Jubahib and civilians Edwin Asion and Mariano Diamante, were abducted, tortured and massacred by government troops in August 1999 in Mawab, Compostela Valley.

Before the people’s court, the MAC filed charges against Brig. Gen. Generoso Senga (former chief of the 701st Infantry Brigade and current AFP spokesperson); Lt. Col. Herbert Aviramte (60th IB chief); Capt. Felicisimo Madayag (60th IB intelligence officer); Lt. Rolando Catiil (60th IB “Bravo” Coy head); T/Sgt. Rubencio Cacho; S/ Sgt. Marcial Colot; Sgt. Ernesto Abad; Cpl. Fernando Algarme; and Civilian Armed Auxiliary forces Dominiano Sevilla and Virgilio Ampo.

Also named were Rey Chiong Uy (Blucor Mining Corp. owner and current mayor of Tagum City); Rogelio Uy (Bullex Mining Corp. president); Joel Brilliantes (JB Mining Management Corp. owner); and Virgie Allones (special assistant to the president of Blucor).

According to the MAC, the Mawab 4 were murdered because they objected to the military and local mining proprietors’ plan to ►



Mounting anti-Moro violence

As the US-Estrada regime continues its anti-Moro war, more and more Moro and non-Moro people fall victim to ceaseless military operations. Cases of killings, arson and the desecration and destruction of mosques are mounting. Hundreds of thousands (with their numbers growing) of people who were evicted from their homes suffer from dismal and deteriorating conditions in evacuation centers where they were forced to seek shelter.

The Estrada regime blatantly neglects war evacuees.

As of September 13, more than 600,000 people have been forcibly evacuated by vicious military operations in different parts of Mindanao. According to government's own doctored statistics, the number of recorded deaths due to harsh conditions in evacuation centers in North Cotabato, Maguindanao and Lanao del Sur has reached 300. Most of the victims are elderly folk and children, 91% of whom are below 10 years of age.

Almost 87% of deaths are caused by diarrhea, pneumonia, measles and gastroenteritis. After many months of repeatedly dismissing the increasing number of deaths in evacuation centers, officials of the Department of Health finally admitted on September 16 that these

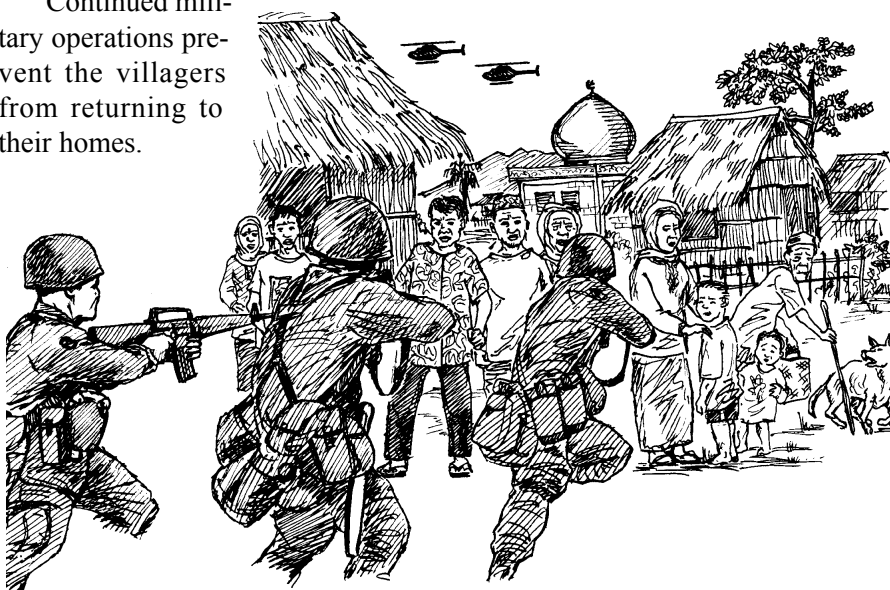
were due to lack of sanitation and services.

That 600 health workers assigned to Mindanao have not been paid since June is an added indication of apathy towards the war evacuees.

Worse, evacuation centers are not only neglected but are being demolished hastily by government. In Pagalungan, Mindanao, for example, the government is forcing hundreds of families to fit in "warehouse extension tents" that are merely temporary structures. To ensure the absence of evidence of the large numbers evacuated by military operations, evacuees who happened to be in front of the Pagalungan municipal hall were first to be evicted, while those at the back were allowed to remain, as long as they were not visible from the road.

On September 3, local government goons violently evicted 97 families seeking refuge in Pagalungan Elementary School without offering any relocation. According to residents of Pagalungan, they could recall only two instances when the Department of Social Welfare and Community Development sent them any assistance. Like the rest of the evacuees, they make do with aid coming from the Catholic and Protestant churches as well as non-government organizations. Since they were evicted on June 10 during the AFP attack on Camp Rajamuda, six children and an elderly person have died, two gave birth in the evacuation center while one suffered a miscarriage.

Continued military operations prevent the villagers from returning to their homes.



◀ control gold mining in Monkayo, Compostela Valley and prepare for the entry of foreign mining companies.

Meanwhile, human rights advocates in Davao condemned the reactionary court for clearing senior officials involved in the murder of the Mawab 4. Issued this August,

the decision of the Deputy Ombudsman for the Military ignored testimonies from witnesses on what transpired in the seven hours that elapsed from the time the Mawab 4 were abducted to the time their bodies were discovered bearing multiple gunshot wounds and signs of torture. **AB**

An increasing number of civilians are being targeted by the anti-Moro war. About 50 persons have been massacred by anti-Moro vigilantes trained and armed by the AFP to intensify anti-Moro hysteria. Non-Moro civilians also fall victim to their violence.

On August 8, 65-year-old Fatima Nur, and her two sons Datun and Kahnoddin were wounded after masked 38th IB troops, who suspected the presence of the MILF, strafed their house in Dalican, Datu Odin Sinsuat, Maguindanao.

On July 10, members of the PNP Special Action Force (SAF) went on a rampage at the Jolo public market in Sulu. Enraged by the death of two of their companions, they indiscriminately fired at people in the market. Frightened civilians fled. Some of them were punched and kicked by the SAF troops.

Muslim scholars and clerics are also victims of the anti-Moro war. In a recent report, a teacher and student were killed at Tipo-tipo, Basilan by Captain Penegito, 1st Lieutenant San Juan and 1st Lieutenant Andres (all elements of the Scout Rangers). Abdul Siddik Ismael, a teacher at the Bohepiyang Elementary School and his nephew Ridwan Masir, a high school student, were heading back to the school after hearing gunshots there, when the Scout Rangers blocked, tortured and killed them. The fascists not only shot them dead, but also broke Ismael's two thighbones and cut off Masir's right arm.

Ustadz Saribin Jamilon, a Muslim scholar, was detained by the military on July 30 at Ipil, Zamboanga del Sur, for allegedly being an MILF supporter.

Asma Tampipi, 21, was one of the peace rallyists at Malangas, Zamboanga del Sur on July 22. He criticized military operatives for taking pictures and shooting videos of them. The next day, suspected soldiers shot him dead. Tampipi is a businessman, fishpond operator and the youngest scholar and imam (religious leader of Islam).

In the same town, on July 17, Mohammed Dani, a Madrasah (school where teaching is done in Arabic) teacher who was accused of being an MILF supporter, was murdered. Madrasah classes were later suspended because teachers began hiding for fear of being the next victims.

Two statements on the massive military operations in Sulu against the Abu Sayyaf

Both Estrada regime and Abu Sayyaf are criminal and bestial, with the regime killing and injuring far more civilians

Jose Maria Sison
NDFP Chief Political Consultant

As Sen. Aquilino Pimentel has so well exposed, the Abu Sayyaf is a creation of the US Central Intelligence Agency and Philippine military officers headed by Gen. Guillermo Ruiz. He has been in the news recently as the buddy of Robert Aventajado in negotiating with the Abu Sayyaf.

Military and civilian officials of the Estrada regime have taken commissions from the Abu Sayyaf for the negotiation and delivery of ransom money, amounting to more than US\$ 15 million or P 675 million. This is a huge operating revenue in a sunrise industry (kidnapping) under the Estrada regime.

A retired colonel of the Philippine Army, with the alias of Dragon, knows Abu Sayyaf like he does the palm of his hand. Five months of ransom negotiations should be more than enough time for the Estrada regime and its military and police to build up intelligence and surveillance stocks for a surgical operation, using commandoes instead of ►

On July 27, Abdur Rauf Sibing and Alan Aburi, both imams, were killed in Naga, Zamboanga del Sur.

The police also once raided a Madrasah at Labangan, Zamboanga del Sur. They made a list of all the teachers and students' names, dragged them out of the classrooms and took pictures of them.

On May 7, Haron Lupon, Tujani Dolanda and Monsour Alilisan—all suspected members of the MILF—were abducted by hooded members of the PAOCTF and Special Anti-Terrorist Unit at the MacArthur Hi-way in Davao. Days later, police strafed a house visited by Lupon before he was abducted, killing a 41-year-old woman and wounding her four-year-old child. **AB**

◀ 3,000 troops, against Abu Sayyaf.

But the current much ballyhooed storming of the Abu Sayyaf criminal gang is actually a wild attack against the civilian population of Jolo. The Moro communities are the ones suffering so many casualties from indiscriminate bombings, artillery fire and mortar fire, massacres, arson and looting and forced mass evacuation.

The regime must end the attacks on the civilian population, allow the dead to be buried, the injured to be brought to hospitals and the living to get their supply of food and medicine. The press and independent human rights organizations must have free movement to investigate the situation and bring out the truth.

The Estrada regime has maliciously opted for a blind and brutal campaign against the civilian populace all for the purpose of macho grandstanding and gaining more points in poll surveys of the telephone-owning minority of the Philippine population.

Both the Estrada regime and the Abu Sayyaf are criminal and bestial. By carrying out a wild military campaign that victimizes the civilian population, the Estrada regime is killing and injuring far more people than the Abu Sayyaf has done in the course of kidnapping and hostaging dozens of victims.

Mr. Estrada has only himself to blame for his global humiliation in the hands of the Abu Sayyaf. Showing respect for his fellow criminals in the Abu Sayyaf, he has assigned no less than a member of his cabinet to negotiate with them, in sharp contrast to his scuttling the peace negotiations with such revolutionary forces as the MILF and NDFP.

Mr. Estrada thinks that once more he can make political capital out of making a big budget war movie production against Abu Sayyaf. But he forgets that his regime is steadily sinking because of its subservience to foreign monopoly interests, corruption, bankruptcy and wanton violations of human rights. The resistance of the people to his regime is mounting. **AB**

Estrada must be held accountable for gross violations of human rights and grave breaches of international humanitarian law

Luis Jalandoni

National Democratic Front of the Philippines

On orders of Mr. Estrada, the Manila government's armed forces are carrying out a massive attack on the civilian population of Jolo, causing the death and wounding of hundreds of civilians. The military troopers, numbering more than 3,000, ignore the distinction between the Abu Sayyaf kidnap gang and the numerous innocent civilians in Jolo. This is a criminal act that violates the basic human rights of the civilian population. It also constitutes a grave breach of international humanitarian law that strictly prohibits attacks on the civilian population.

Following his all-out war policy against the Moro Islamic Liberation Front and the Moro people, which has caused widespread death and destruction and the uprooting of a million internal refugees in Mindanao, Mr. Estrada's orders of a massive attack in Jolo projects a pattern of massive military attacks against civilian communities. This dangerous pattern of utter contempt for human rights and international humanitarian law must be vigorously exposed and opposed by the Filipino people. Mr. Estrada should be held accountable by the international community for his gross violations of human rights and grave breaches of international humanitarian law.

Going to Zamboanga City and making a spectacular show of the attack on Jolo, as he made a show of the so-called take over of Camp Abubakar, Mr. Estrada is likewise seeking to divert attention from the deep economic crisis his regime's anti-national and anti-people policies have plunged the country into. The plunging value of the Philippine peso, the repeated oil price hikes, the scandals involving Mr. Estrada and his cronies, these are pushed into background as he struts around like a victor in a action movie.

No matter all his macho posturing, the broad movement demanding his ouster is growing stronger. The revolutionary armed struggles of the New People's Army and the Bangsamoro Islamic Armed Forces are bound to intensify. **AB**

EUROPE ON FIRE

Protests against continued oil price hikes in the international market and steep taxes on petroleum imposed by governments are spreading like wildfire across Europe. They signal the depth to which the economic crisis in Europe has plunged, the sweeping unrest among workers and the people even in central imperialist countries like France, Britain and Germany and their readiness to take militant courses of action.

France: A broad alliance of farmers and truck, taxi and ambulance drivers as well as train operators launched protests in the country's key cities. In the first week of September, the French economy came to a standstill when protesters set up barricades, blocking the country's oil refineries and depots with more than 1,700 vehicles. Prior to this, French fisherfolk barricaded ports and succeeded in having taxes on petroleum (comprising up to 75% of its overall price) used by fisherfolk abolished. In September 7, protesters succeeded in having petroleum taxes reduced by 3 billion francs (P18 billion) on the national level. Petroleum prices rose by 40% in France in recent months.

Britain: Delivery truck drivers and farmers barricaded most of the country's oil refineries. This quickly led to a scarcity of petroleum that completely paralyzed key cities and ports in the country in the second week of September. Only tankers delivering petroleum for ambulances and firetrucks were allowed by protesters to travel. On September 21, the protesters rejected an offer by the opposition Conservative Party to reduce petroleum prices after the next elections. The barricaders believe that a 3 pence-reduction in prices was insufficient. The Blair government to date refuses to grant even temporary relief. Britain has the highest petroleum prices in Europe.

Besides, petroleum prices rose 42% in the past three years. Half of this is due to government taxes comprising up to 76% of overall prices.

The Netherlands: To dramatize opposition to oil price increases, train operators and taxi drivers went on a go-slow protest in Amsterdam and Rotterdam, two of The Netherlands' leading cities. On September 15, the drivers' union caused the country's economy to come to a full stop.

Belgium: Some 2,000 train operators, taxi and bus drivers created a standstill in traffic in Central Belgium on September 10 to demand a reduction in petroleum taxes. The protest intensified on September 14 when members of the train operators' union walked out on a dialogue with the government. The protesters targeted oil depots along highways linking the country with Germany and The Netherlands. Before long, haulers joined the protest, halting operations in the country's three biggest ports.

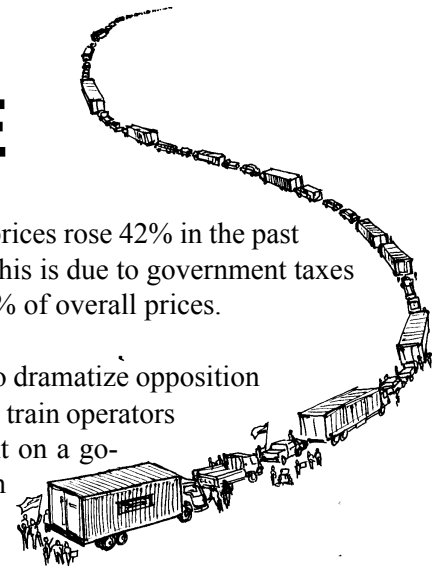
Germany: Train operators barricaded the highway linking Germany with its neighboring countries and trooped en masse to the French-German border. On September 14, some 50 farmers used their tractors to barricade an oil refinery in Lingen, a city in northwestern Germany.

The picket was the first of its kind in the country.

Norway: Cargo truck drivers blocked 11 oil terminals for almost a day on September 18. Protesting drivers in Oslo succeeded in having petroleum prices reduced by 4.5%, to be implemented next year. Although their country is the second biggest oil exporter in Europe, Norwegians pay among the highest petroleum taxes.

A huge percentage (70%) of prices is composed of taxes levied by the Norwegian government on petroleum products. ►

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The Palestine struggle for self-determination

TOWARDS DEFEATING IMPERIALIST AND ISRAELI OPPRESSION

The Palestinian people's struggle for an independent state is raging amid continued attempts by US imperialism and the puppet Israeli government to frustrate it.

An agreement to finally settle the question of Palestinian statehood was not reached on the September 13 deadline owing to the Israeli ruling class' stubborn refusal to withdraw from the long-occupied Palestinian territories. Israel's intransigence enjoys US support.

Nothing substantial has been arrived at so far in the "peace process" between the parties in conflict. The Palestinian leadership nonetheless decided to extend the negotiation until November, after which it stated that it would go on with the declaration of independence whether or not an agreement is reached.

The US had earlier threatened to "review its relations" with and cut aid to Palestine if the latter would not back down from unilaterally declaring independence, hinting at its readiness to use its power to make Palestine succumb to Israel's conditions. Israel is after all its most trusted ally and the bulwark of its imperialist domination in the Middle East. The Palestinian people, for their part, steadfastly refuse to knuckle under US efforts to draw them onto the path of capitulation.

The Middle East, being the world's main source of petroleum, is of great interest to the US and other imperialist ►

◀ **Spain:** On September 15, Spanish fisherfolk blocked ports in Barcelona as farmers and cargo truck drivers fortified their barricades on oil terminals. They demanded that government find ways of reducing petroleum taxes aside from pegging taxes at their 1999 levels.

Italy: Fisherfolk barricaded certain ports to slow down the movement of products entering and leaving the country. Train operators and taxi drivers also launched a protest action on September 16.

Sweden: Cargo truck drivers blocked the flow of cargo in the country's biggest ports. Petroleum prices in Sweden rose by 20% this year.

Protests are spreading to other parts of Europe, the US, the Middle East and even Asia. People's actions in Finland, Slovakia and Poland are strengthening. The Hungarian government has been able to avoid such protests for now by rescinding a scheduled 6%-increase in petroleum taxes in the country.

The whole world is ablaze with the sparking anew of the fires of protest. The imperialists are on edge. The proletariat are rejoicing, persevering and preparing for bigger battles in the future. **AB**

SUCCESSFUL WIDESPREAD PROTEST ACTIONS IN AUSTRALIA AGAINST THE WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM

More than 10,000 workers and people trooped to the streets of Melbourne, Australia on September 11 to protest against the capitalist system and imperialist globalization. The protest action was held in time for the Melbourne conference of the World Economic Forum (WEF), a convention of the world's biggest capitalists.

Anti-riot police (some of whom were mounted) attacked, clubbed, punched and kicked demonstrators who set up barricades around the hotel and casino complex where the WEF was being held.

Due to the violent police attacks, 51 of the demonstrators were wounded, 11 seriously, while one fell unconscious. The next day, three activists were arrested while police troops continued to attack and block the rally.

Instead of retreating, however, the militants intensified their opposition to imperialist globalization by strengthening their ranks. With arms linked, they condemned the fascist violence of the police.

The successful demonstration delayed the opening of the WEF conference when scores of delegates were trapped in the protesters' barricades. **AB**

powers. Thus in the last more-than-half-a-century, they have continually maneuvered to establish influence in the region. The Arab-Israeli conflict itself was provoked and aggravated by imperialists to serve their interests.

A peace disturbed. Before imperialist incursion in the Middle East, Muslim Arabs, Jews and Christians in Palestine coexisted in relative peace for hundreds of years.

Imperialist intervention in the Middle East began in 1915. The region, at the time predominantly populated by Muslim Arabs, was then part of the Ottoman Empire. The United Kingdom (UK) captured Palestine from the Ottomans in 1917 aided by Arabs who rose against the empire, driven by a promise of national independence.

But the UK entered into conflicting commitments at the same time. First, it signed in 1917 a treaty with France and Russia dividing the region among them. Second, to gain the help of Jews in its war, the UK promised them the establishment of a Jewish “national home” in Palestine, a pledge subsequently integrated in the mandate conferred by the League of Nations to it in 1922.

In the ensuing 26 years of the UK’s rule in Palestine, the Arab-Jewish conflict took shape. As Jews migrated en masse to Palestine egged on by the reactionary and expansionist Zionist ideology, widespread Arab resistance met the impending Jewish domination. The Arab-Israeli war broke out when the state of Israel was finally established in 1948. The Arab nations of Egypt, Jordan and Syria came to the aid of Palestinians. Israel defeated the Arabs in the war, consequently capturing more Palestinian territory. The West Bank (of the Jordan River) and Gaza Strip, however, came under Jordanian and Egyptian control, respectively.

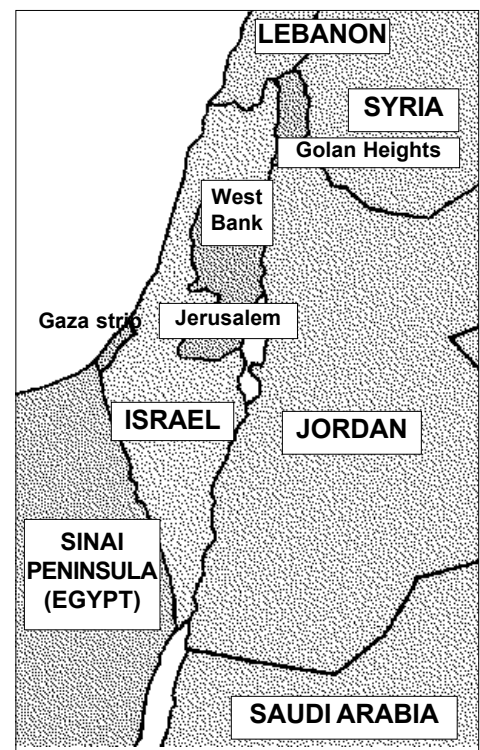
Hundreds of thousands of Palestinians were displaced by the war. While they started to spread as refugees among neighboring countries, Jews migrating to Palestine from other countries further grew in number. In exile, the Palestinians’ national aspiration and desire to return to their homeland remained. The Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) was established in 1964 as a united front of Palestinian refugees and *fedayeen* (guerrilla) groups to mobilize the Palestinian people in the struggle to regain the lands usurped by Israel.

In 1967, the Arab-Israeli war again broke out. Within six days, Israel once again defeated the Arabs and captured the West Bank, Gaza Strip and Golan Heights now collectively known as the Occupied Territories, the core of the continuing Arab-Israeli conflict. Led by the PLO, the Palestinians consistently fought their colonizers. A high point in the history of their struggle was the 1987 *intifada* or uprising characterized by demonstrations, strikes and Palestinians engaging Israeli troops armed only with stones and slingshots.

Palestine is composed of present-day Israel, the Occupied Territories (West Bank, Gaza Strip and Golan Heights) and the Sinai Peninsula, currently controlled by Egypt. The Occupied Territories and Sinai Peninsula were both captured by Israel in 1967. From 1975 to 1982, Israel gradually withdrew from the Sinai Peninsula.

Imperialist maneuvers. As the conflict they themselves fomented in Palestine and the entire Middle East worsened, imperialist powers led by the US initiated different moves to “resolve” it to their advantage. The US’ involvement in the issue became more pronounced in the 1970s. Its efforts focused on neutralizing the countries supporting Palestine and fighting Israel. It made an outstanding breakthrough with the signing of a peace agreement between Egypt and Israel in 1979. Through diplomatic sanctions, the US was able to pressure Syria into likewise making peace with Israel in 1991. In 1994, Jordan followed suit.

In dealing with the PLO, the US demanded that the organization recognize Israeli sovereignty and renounce its “terrorist” tactics as preconditions. Through the years, US “mediation” in the “peace process” resulted in agreements replete with provisions favoring Israel and ensuring the consolidation of imperialist influence in the Middle East. The UN for its part spinelessly submits to the US’ maneuvers, while formally recognizing the state of Palestine.





NEWS OF STRUGGLE

SOLDIER KILLED IN SAMAR AMBUSH

One soldier was killed when elements of the Philippine Army were ambushed by the NPA on September 13 in Sitio Babaclayon, Barangay Caranas, Motiong, Samar. The soldiers who were on patrol when they were ambushed belonged to the 34th IB based in San Jose de Buan town.

LUCIO TAN GUARDS DISARMED

NPA fighters disarmed on September 20 four abusive security guards of Progressive Farms, a piggery owned by Lucio Tan in Barangay Saravia, Koronadal, South Cotabato. Confiscated from the guards were two M16 rifles, a carbine, a 12-gauge shotgun, ammunition and two hand-held radios.

SOLDIER PUNISHED IN BICOL

The NPA punished Sgt. Ernesto Martin of the 2nd IB on September 1 in Barangay Aroroy, Sorsogon, Sorsogon. A .45 caliber pistol was seized from him.

The 2nd IB engages in counterrevolutionary military operations that wreak havoc on the people in parts of Albay and Sorsogon.

TWO FIREARMS SEIZED IN KALINGA AMBUSH

An M14 and an M16 were confiscated by the NPA in an ambush on August 8 in Balbalan, Kalinga.

Killed in the ambush were Cpl. Crispin Antonio of the 21st IB "A" Coy and Dante Sagibo, a CAFGU member.

The 21st IB has just been reassigned to Kalinga following its expulsion by the people of Isabela for its criminal and antipeople activities.

THOUSANDS JOIN ANTI-ESTRADA MARCH

Tens of thousands of people successfully held widespread and militant march-rallies in different parts of the country on September 21. With demonstrations marking the 28th year of martial law imposition, the call to oust the ruling Estrada faction reverberated.

In Manila, more than 10,000 people rallied, including militant organizations of the toiling masses and other democratic forces, church workers and anti-Estrada personalities. They criticized the Estrada regime, which they said further mires the people in a political and economic crisis that is far deeper than what existed in the dark days of the Marcos dictatorship.

In Baguio City, hundreds strongly condemned the intensification of military abuses and widespread cronyism and corruption in government.

In Southern Tagalog, thousands of people launched protest actions in Bacoor, Cavite; Sta. Cruz and Calamba, Laguna; Antipolo, Cainta and Taytay, Rizal; San Jose, Occidental Mindoro; Calaca, Lipa City, Nasugbu, Calatagan and Lian, Batangas; Calapan City and Victoria, Oriental Mindoro; and Infanta and San Francisco, Quezon. In Lucena City, an anti-fascist march towards the Southern Luzon Command's major camp was held.

Around 2,000 people poured into the streets of the cities of Bacolod, Cebu and Iloilo. In Davao City, about 400 drivers and jeepney operators paralyzed transportation in unity with more than 1,000 people who rallied against the Marcos-style Estrada government and escalating military rule. The drivers also drummed up their demand for a P1-fare hike in the face of continuously rising oil prices. **AB**

◀ **Towards the future.** The US-backed "peace process" succeeds only in further deferring the fulfillment of Palestine's national aspiration. Entrusting the fate of Palestine

to such a process is daydreaming. Nothing will be more correct for the Palestinian people than to proceed with the declaration of independence whether or not an agreement is

reached. They can face any reaction from Israel and US imperialism by continuing their fight until they fully achieve self-determination that has been denied them for so long. **AB**